

School Newsletter

Autumn 1 2025

In harmony we
Nurture, Inspire, Flourish



We are very impressed at how well our new children have settled in school life at St John's. We have had a number of external visitors over the past few weeks and have received lots of very positive comments about how settled our Early Years classes are and how well embedded their learning routines already are. The rest of our school community have also settled into their new year groups and have really responded well to our new expectations of Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Your Best.

Thank you for your support this term both in school, through volunteering to support Forest School sessions, attending year group information sessions and attending our Celebration assemblies as well as at home by supporting with reading and homework.

We have been working very hard to put together a series of additional exciting learning experiences which add to the amazing learning that takes place in class every day. We have had year groups enjoying their block of Forest School sessions, our Mental Health day, our new Young Carer sessions and an all day Greek workshop. Many more events and experiences are planned for the term ahead.

Our Year 2 children led our Harvest Festival at St John's Church earlier this month. They led the service with confidence and we particularly enjoyed their beautiful singing. All classes had taken part in a Harvest Pause day further allowing them to understand the importance of harvest. Thank you also to everyone who was able to contribute an item to our harvest collection – these items have been donated to the Dorking Foodbank.

This half term has also seen the whole school taking part in elections. Each class voted for the children they would like to represent them at the school's pupil parliament. In addition, everyone was able to cast their vote for the Year 6 Lead Ambassadors after hearing their speeches in assembly. Poppy and Betty were elected to these roles and are looking forward to leading the pupil parliament this year. In addition, Year 6 were invited to put themselves forward as House Captains. After some very impressive interviews with myself we picked Scarlett, Christopher, Alex and Arabella to represent their houses. We hope this role will help to further support our house teams across the school.

Thank you to you all for ensuring that your child is in school on time, every day. Even though there seems to have been a huge number of coughs and colds doing the rounds our overall attendance is currently at 94.7% which is just below the national figure. Our aim is to get our attendance above the national figure so please keep up the positive start we've achieved.

As the weather gets colder and wetter, please ensure that your child brings a warm, waterproof coat to school every day as we endeavour to get everyone outside at break and lunchtimes as much as possible.

Finally, we are delighted to share that Mrs Woodhouse is expecting her second child. We are busy making plans to cover her absence and will share these once we have more news.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if ever you have any questions or ideas to support us. would like to volunteer or join our PTA.

Kathryn Saunderson
Acting Headteacher



Attendance



Attendance at school is vital if pupils are to reach their full potential. Often, children stay at home when they have a minor illness and they miss out on learning and social experiences.

If your child is very ill, it is important that you seek medical advice – either through your GP, Pharmacist or by contacting NHS Direct on 111.

If your child has a minor illness, often they can manage in school and actually feel better being in school, learning with their friends. Please remember that we have lots of qualified First Aiders in school and a first aid room where your child can go if they feel unwell during the day.

If your child is unwell during the day, we will contact you and discuss with you if they need to go home, or whether to administer some medication to help relieve their symptoms (for example, Calpol or Piriton). Staff are also trained to be able to administer medications which have been prescribed by a Doctor. If you need us to support with the administration of medications during the day, please pop into the school office to see a member of staff.

Remember, if your child is unwell in the morning, they can always come into school later, or after lunch if they feel better.

School Attendance to Date – Current National Attendance is 95.4%

Happiness (Nursery)	99.71%
Co-operation (Year 3)	96.54%
Trust (Year 2)	95
Love (Year 1)	95.70%
Courage (Year 5)	94.17%
Resilience (Year 4)	93.63%
Kindness (Reception)	93.03%
Respect (Year 6)	92.88%

Attendance expectations

- Telephone the school before 8.30am each day of your child's absence.
- Tell the school in advance of any medical appointments and bring in appointment cards/letters.
- If you are not sure whether your child is well enough to attend school, try sending them in as they often perk up on arrival.
- If you and your child are experiencing difficulties with school attendance then talk to us as a first step so we can help.

Nursery Happiness Class

Our topic for the first few weeks was 'All about Me'. We learnt all about families, sisters, brothers and any pets that we may have at home, along with this we explored differences and similarities, and celebrated their unique qualities. We made self portraits and spoke about emotions, feelings and how this might affect others.



Reception Kindness Class



What an exciting start to the school year it's been in Reception! Our topic this half term has been "*All about me*", and the children have loved sharing stories about themselves, their families and the places they live. We have been learning and embedding our St John's values, thinking about what makes each one of us special and unique.

We've had fun exploring rhyming through songs, stories and games, helping the children to develop their early phonics and listening skills. In maths, the children have been busy comparing and matching objects, exploring what is the same or different and beginning to recognise and create simple patterns. The class have also thoroughly enjoyed their forest school sessions, embracing the outdoors and developing their curiosity and teamworking skills.

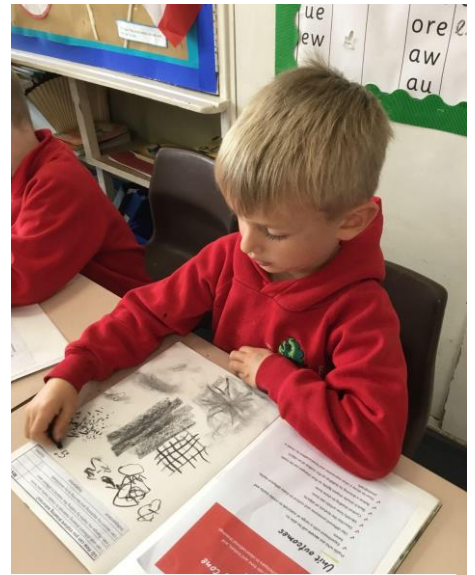
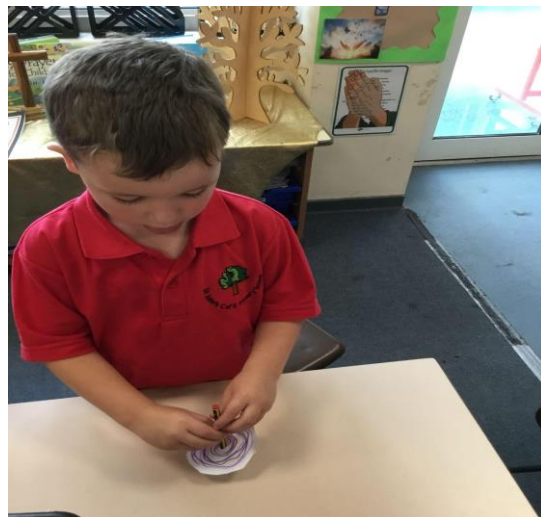
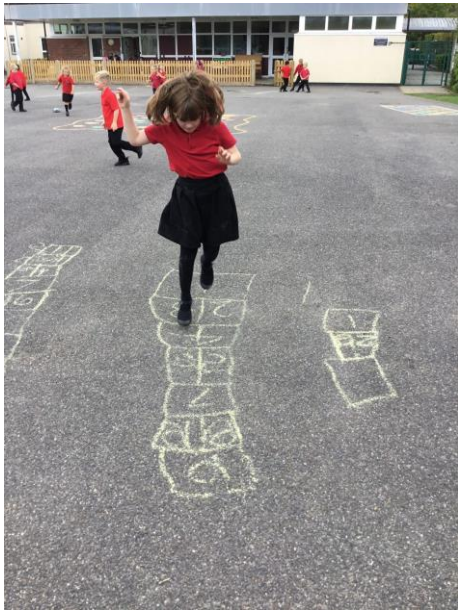
As we have neared the end of this half term The children have enjoyed taking part in our Harvest activities and learning about Diwali the festival of lights. It's been wonderful to see how well the children have settled into school life- they have been full of excitement and curiosity in their learning.

Year 1 Love Class



Love Class have had a fantastic first term in Year 1! We've had great fun tasting and juicing different fruits as we got ready to make our own smoothies. The children have enjoyed exploring a variety of fruits, learning about their different tastes and textures. In Science and RE, we've been thinking all about our wonderful world – looking at what makes it special, the amazing things God has given us, and how we can help take care of it. It's been a busy and exciting start to the year, full of learning and discovery!

Year 2 Trust Class

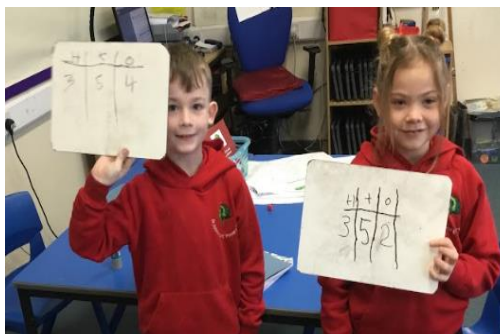
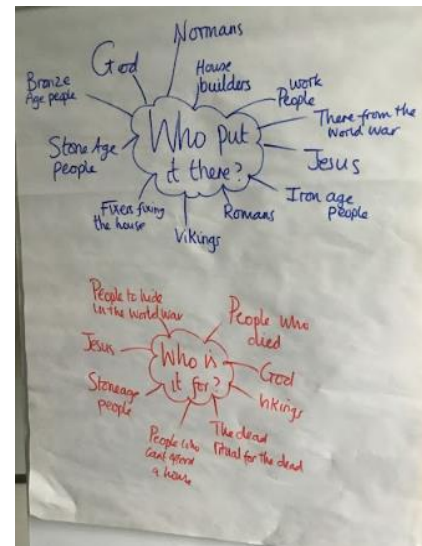


The term started with a fabulous 'Sensational Start' to our topic of 'Slates to Screens'. The children began learning about what it was like to live in the past by drawing and playing hopscotch on the playground, making peg dolls and creating spinning wheels. It has been wonderful to show the class what our school looked like in the past and how it has changed. The children have studied our school photo albums closely and have been fascinated with how the classroom's, outside area and uniform have evolved over time. In art, we have been learning about mark making with a range of media and how to create texture and tone. The children have created some wonderful still life drawings using all the skills they have learned throughout the unit.

Year 3 Cooperation Class

What a fantastic start the children have had in Year 3, they are working very hard and trying their best!

In Art, the children have produced some fantastic cave art linking to our History about the Stone Age. The children have taken part in drama which has helped when writing their own story 'Stonehenge Boy' based on the book 'Stone Age Boy'. They have enjoyed maths using manipulatives, investigating what to do when there are not enough to subtract from and playing games to reinforce place value. In Science, the children have looked at what makes a balanced diet, the bones in our bodies and muscles and movement. Each week we have been lucky enough to do Forest School with Vicky which the children thoroughly enjoyed as did Miss Swyer and I! it was great to see the children in a different environment and how they worked together leaving their own learning. They had a brilliant pause day where they learnt about the journey chocolate has before we even see it on the shelf and decorated a box for Harvest. What a jam packed half term!



Year 4 Resilience Class

What a fantastic start to the year! We have been busy all around. To start the year off we have been looking at digestion in Science, thinking about how our bodies absorb all the nutrients from our food and how to look after our teeth. In Geography, we have carried on the theme of food and health and looked into where our food comes from, even asking our lovely Donna about where our school dinners come from. Discussing the benefits and disadvantages of sourcing our food locally and having it imported. We learnt how we get our chocolate from Cote D'Ivoire and were amazed at all the steps it takes for the cocoa bean to become chocolate bars. The children have also learnt about Fair Trade and the importance of this for farmers all around the world and the small steps that we can take to help them.



Year 4 Cooperation Class

A highlight of the term has been our DT project. The children have been very enthusiastic about learning about the process of improving a product and making it ready for market. They were so excited to taste biscuits on the market, thinking about what ingredients they could add to improve a simple biscuit. We all had so much fun making these and then sharing them with members of staff to conduct our market research and feedback (there was lots of yums and loss of words - and Mr Rogers told us they were the best biscuits he had ever had!)



Year 5 Courage Class

Year 5 have travelled back to Ancient Greece in their history lessons this term and thought about the legacy that the Ancient Greeks left behind. We have learnt about the beginnings of democracy and how the independent city-states were governed. We have learnt about the first philosophers, the Greek Gods and Goddesses and have enjoyed discovering Greek myths and legends. This has tied in nicely with our class text: 'Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief' by Rick Riordan.

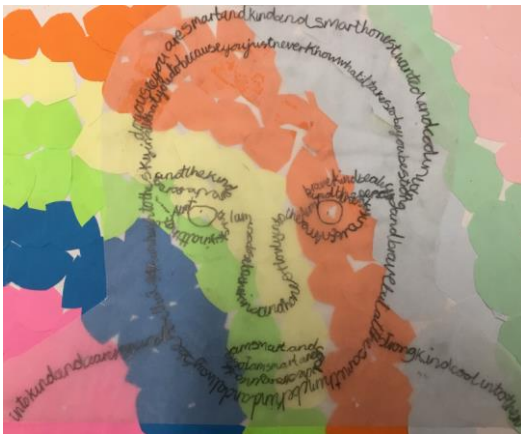


Year 5 Courage Class

Back in class. year 5 have investigated mixtures and separation in science - we have made mixtures, sieved and filtered mixtures, made solutions, investigated the effects of increasing water temperature when dissolving solids and made our own salt plains to investigate evaporation.



In art, we have experimented with different materials and ideas in our unit on mixed media self portraits. The children looked at the work of Chila Kumari Burman for inspiration and then used different materials to express their ideas. There were some amazing results!

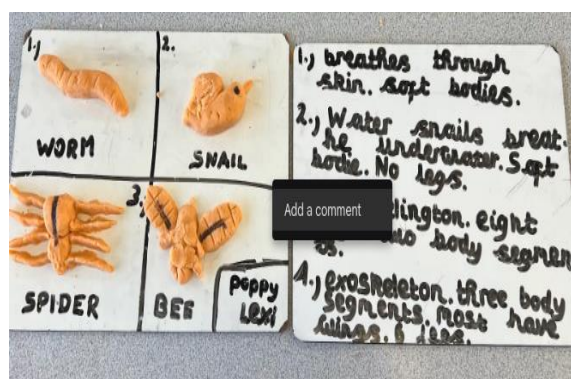


Our creativity continued in our musical theatre unit where the children worked in groups to perform a song describing a journey. This was a test of team work as much as creativity and musicality. Everyone did brilliantly and produced four completely different but equally fantastic performances which combined dancing, singing and acting.

Year 6 Respect Class



Year 6 have settled into life at the top of the school. Poppy and Betty were elected as Lead Ambassadors and were called upon to welcome visitors to school on our Open Morning. Scarlett, Alex, Arabella and Christopher bravely went for an interview and were chosen to be House Captains. This is a role that we are developing, generating a sense of belonging for each house.



In terms of learning, we have been historians exploring censuses; scientists classifying living things; authors exploring adventure narratives; journalists writing crime reports and artists practicing the technique of chiaroscuro. We have problem solved in maths and developed our maths vocabulary and understanding; we have explored whether images are real or AI generated. Optical illusions have helped us to understand religion and we have learned to discuss and debate using respectful sentence starters.



Two Young Carers from class brought our Young Carer's Day to life by talking to the class about their experiences and the impact they feel day-to-day which was so powerful for all of us.



A group of the class have also begun a pilot scheme run by The Rotary Club which is a mini Duke Of Edinburgh style award scheme. We are excited to have been chosen for this scheme and thank The Rotary Club for the opportunity.

Thanks also to the Quick Response Memorial Woodland in Abinger, who have invited us to take part in their Remembrance Service on 11th November which is our first chance to represent the school outside.

Diary Dates 2025/26

October

23rd & 24th October

Inset Days

27th-31st October

Half Term

November

4th November

Parents Evening 3-6pm

6th November

Parents Evening 3-6pm

11th November

Year 6 to Memorial Gardens for Remembrance Sunday

11th November

Year 5 “We Will Rock You” at the Ashcombe

12th November

Year 6 Bikeability Try out Day

13th November

Year 6 Learn to Ride Day- am

18th November

Open Evening 4-7pm

19th November

Year 3 Stone Age Workshop

20th November

Year 4 Egyptian Workshop

25th November

Year 5 Boys Football at St Martin's C of E Primary

28th November

Harmony Mufti Day

28th November

Harmony Art Exhibition at 3pm

December

1st - 5th December

Year 6 Bikeability

2nd December

Year 6 Boys Football at St Martin's C of E Primary

Diary Dates 2025/26

3rd December	Christingle
10th December	Nursery/Reception Nativity
12th December	Christmas Jumper Day
12th December	Christmas Fayre 2- 4pm
16th December	Flu Immunisations Reception-Year 6
16th & 17th December	Years 1,2 & 3 Christmas Show 2-3pm
18th December	Nursery -End of Term
18th December	Christmas Carol Service KS2 at St John's Church 9.30-10.30am
19th December	End of Term 1.15pm Finish
22nd Dec-2nd Jan 2026	Christmas Holidays
January	
5th January	Inset Day
6th January	Children Return to School
8th January	Year 1 Toys Skill Workshop
20th January	Young Voices-Choir to O2 10am-11pm
21st - 23rd January	Year 4 Bikeability
February	
16th-20th February	Half Term
23rd February	GST Inset Day
24th February	Children Return to school

Diary Dates 2026/27

March

5th March

World Book Day- Mufti

9th March

Year 3 Feet First Walking Training

17th March

Parents Evening 3.30-6pm

18th March

Year 1 ZooLabs Visit

19th March

Parents Evening 3.30-6pm

19th March

M&M Productions-The Secret Garden

25th-27th March

Year 4 PGL Marchants Hill

26th March

Easter Service Led by Year 3 at St John's Church

26th March

Nursery End Of Term

27th March

End of Term - 1.15pm Finish

30th March-10th April

Easter Holidays

April

13th April

Children Return to School

May

11th - 14th May

Year 6 SATs Week

25th- 29th May

Half Term

June

1st- 5th June

Year 6 Residential Isle of Wight

Diary Dates 2026/27

17th June	Year 6 Leavers Service at Guildford Cathedral 9am-1pm
19th June	Year 6 Trip to Wintershall
25th June	Mufti Day-Donations for the Summer Fayre
26th June	Sports Day
July	
1st July	Transition/Move up Day
3rd July	Summer Fayre 2-4pm
9th July	Year 6 Awards and Production Evening
13th July	Year 6 Leavers Service St John's Church 9am-1pm
16th July	Nursery End of Term
17th July	End of Term -Finish 1.15pm
20th, 21st & 22nd	Inset Days
23rd July- 31st August TBC	Summer Holidays

Dear Parent/Carer

If you consider that there are exceptional circumstances relating to your request, please let the school have full details. Each application for a leave of absence will be considered on a case by case basis.

Penalty Notices to Address Poor Attendance at School

A Penalty Notice may be issued as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carers for their child's unauthorised absence from school (absence without the agreement of the school or not covered by a medical note) and will be used by Surrey County Council in the following circumstances :-

1. Pupils identified by police and Attendance Advice Officers (formerly Inclusion Officers) engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
2. Leave of absence in term time (5 days or 10 sessions or more).

Please be aware that the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

They may request that Surrey County Council issue Penalty Notices when the absence is not authorised.

Warnings will not be given where it can be shown that parents have been notified that such absences will not be authorised.

3. Finally, the issuing of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where it is judged that a parent is failing to ensure their child's regular school attendance.

This will be considered when a pupil has incurred 10 or more unauthorised sessions in the previous 10 school weeks, which may include a pupil arriving late after close of registration.

If you believe at any stage that your child's absence from school may leave you liable to receive a Penalty Notice, it is extremely important that you act without delay to secure their regular attendance.

If you have any questions or require further support to achieve an improvement in your child's attendance, please contact your child's school or the Attendance Advice Officer.

Surrey County Council is not responsible for authorising pupil absence and therefore cannot withdraw any Penalty Notice requests without the written permission of the Headteacher.

Advice and support is available from an Attendance Advice Officer by contacting Surrey Attendance Service as follows :-

North West - Tel: 01483 518130 South West - Tel: 01483 517874

North East - Tel: 01372 833588 South East - Tel: 01737 737777

Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions

If a child is excluded from school, Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents/carers to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours.

This duty applies to the ***first five days of each exclusion***. Failure to do so will render the parent/carer liable to a Penalty Notice. (Alternative education provision will be made available from the sixth day of any exclusion.)

Amount Payable for a Penalty Notice and Consequences for repeat unauthorised absences

1. If you have not incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children [in a rolling 3 year period](#) since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
1. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in The Magistrates Court.
1. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice –Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, **per parent/carer per child**, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.